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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2147 (2014), in which the Council requested me to report to it on the implementation by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.[1] The report covers developments since the issuance of my report of 5 March 2014 (S/2014/153) and describes recent peace and security initiatives with regard to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region prior to 31 August. The report contains information on progress made in advancing the objectives of the Framework, including measures taken by relevant stakeholders to implement the regional plan of action adopted by Heads of State in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2014.

II. Recent developments

A. Political and security developments

2. Although some progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Framework since my previous report, several obstacles continue to obstruct its full implementation. On the political and security fronts, while the general security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has generally improved, lack of trust between neighbouring countries, the activities of several armed groups and slow progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations (the Kampala Dialogue outcome documents signed in Nairobi on 12 December 2013 by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the former rebel group

[1] In this context, the region is defined as covering the 13 signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, the following four intergovernmental organizations act as guarantors for the Framework: the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations. For further information, see S/2013/119 and S/2013/131, annex.

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Movement of 23 March (M23)) continue to threaten long-term stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and undermine bilateral relations between some countries in the region.

3. On 17 July, I appointed Said Djinnit to be my new Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. Mr. Djinnit replaced Mary Robinson, who has accepted new responsibilities as my Special Envoy for Climate Change.

4. On 18 April, in a letter addressed to Heads of State and other high-level officials in the region, including the Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and my Special Envoy, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) announced their readiness to surrender and demanded an inter-Rwandan dialogue as a condition for disarming. They reiterated their demand in a letter to the Security Council on 4 August. As at 31 August, only 103 FDLR combatants and 202 dependants had surrendered in North Kivu, handing over 102 weapons, while 83 combatants with 236 dependants had disarmed in South Kivu, handing over 83 weapons. Those individuals are currently in two transit camps run by MONUSCO, one in Kanyabayonga (North Kivu) and the other in Walungu (South Kivu).

5. The President of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, in his role as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), has been leading regional efforts to build consensus on the eradication of armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. To reinforce regional resolve on the issue, on 1 June a team of my special envoys and special representatives comprising my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region and the European Union Senior Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region issued a joint statement calling for the complete and unconditional surrender of FDLR and demanding accountability for FDLR combatants suspected of serious crimes. In the statement they noted that the surrender of limited numbers of low-ranking combatants was not encouraging and called for military action against the armed group, in the absence of a credible surrender and disarmament process.

6. At the initiative of the United States Special Envoy, the team of special envoys and special representatives met FDLR representatives in Rome on 26 June, under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio. The special envoys and special representatives took that opportunity to reiterate their demand for the complete and unconditional disarmament of FDLR. They made it clear that the disarmament process should result in the complete dismantling of the organization and the surrender of its senior commanders, within the context of ongoing efforts aimed at the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation or resettlement of foreign armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They reiterated the need to hold accountable those suspected of serious crimes. A delegation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo led by the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Célestin Tunda ya Kasende, participated in the meeting.

7. Against the background of the new dynamic generated by the FDLR voluntary disarmament process, ministers of foreign affairs and defence of States members ICGLR and SADC held a joint ministerial meeting in Luanda on 2 July. The participants in the meeting discussed, in addition to the FDLR issue, the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations. Also on the agenda was the escalation

of tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. My Special Envoy conveyed to the ministers the importance of a unified regional approach to addressing those challenges. Following deliberations, the ministers issued a joint communiqué in which, inter alia, they urged FDLR to disarm within six months and scheduled a midterm review of the process in October. These positions were reiterated during an ICGLR mini-summit held in Luanda on 14 August. The mini-summit was convened by the President of Angola and attended by: the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila; the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni; the Minister of State for Transport, Civil Aviation and the Merchant Marine of the Congo, Rudolphe Adada; the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo; and the Minister of Defence and National Service of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hussein Ali Mwinyi. Participants in the mini-summit gave FDLR a six-month ultimatum to disarm and decided to plan military actions against the group in the absence of progress by the midterm review in October. They also proposed that a joint ICGLR-SADC summit be held in October to review the disarmament process and decide on a course of action. The six-month time frame for FDLR disarmament was endorsed at the thirty-fourth Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, held in Pretoria on 17 and 18 August.

8. Meanwhile, the pace of implementation of the Nairobi Declarations has remained generally slow. In my previous report, I welcomed the promulgation by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 11 February 2014, of an amnesty law, as stipulated in the Nairobi Declarations. After months of delay, I am pleased to report that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has sent a technical team to Uganda and Rwanda, in April and July respectively, to identify and process some 2,000 former M23 members who had fled to those countries in 2013. In the presence of representatives of the Office of my Special Envoy, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and ICGLR, the Government delegation held constructive discussions with the former combatants and the Ugandan and Rwandan authorities on how to grant amnesty and repatriate those individuals and their dependants. The Congolese delegation also registered the former combatants who were present in their cantonments at the time of the visit.

9. The relevant institutions in Kinshasa are now processing the data collected during the visits of the technical team to Rwanda and Uganda. In that regard, I welcome the flexibility demonstrated by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo during an informal ministerial meeting held in New York on 7 August. At the meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo suggested that the Government would still be willing to consider the applications of former M23 combatants after the expiration of the mid-August deadline set in the amnesty law, as they were not responsible for delays in the handling of their cases. Proper handling of the amnesty and repatriation process will contribute to restoring trust between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. It will also facilitate progress in the implementation of other critical provisions of the Nairobi Declarations.

10. On the security front, clashes occurred between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo — FARDC) and the armed forces of Rwanda (Rwanda Defence Force —

RDF) in the border area of Kibumba, North Kivu, on 11 June. The incident, the first military confrontation between the two countries in years, resulted in casualties on both sides. Both my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo urged the parties to exercise restraint and to de-escalate tensions. The rapid intervention of the ICGLR Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism enabled an investigation into the incident to be conducted, at the request of both countries.

11. In its findings, the Mechanism noted that the deployment of the two national armed forces in close proximity to each other along the porous border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda was a significant trigger of conflict, especially given the acrimony that exists between the two countries. The findings also indicated that it was likely that further confrontations would occur unless urgent measures were taken to address the situation. In that regard, the Mechanism recommended that the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda avoid deploying their armed forces in close proximity to one another, especially in contentious border areas.

12. With regard to foreign and local armed groups still operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese armed forces, supported by MONUSCO, have continued to carry out military operations against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain, as indicated in my past two reports on MONUSCO (S/2014/450 and S/2014/698). While the capacity of ADF to cause harm has been reduced, the group remains active and mobile, in particular in Ituri district (Orientale Province) and has continued to attack the national armed forces, which suffered their heaviest loss on 1 May, when 26 soldiers were killed in an ADF ambush north-east of Beni, North Kivu.

B. Humanitarian situation

13. The humanitarian situation throughout the region and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains challenging owing to the continued high numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite continued efforts to improve the lives of populations in conflict-affected areas, some 6.3 million people, of whom an estimated 2.6 million were internally displaced, were still in need of assistance at the time of finalizing the present report. While humanitarian entities have continued to provide vital aid to millions of people, the resources available for humanitarian operations continue to fall seriously short of existing needs. The humanitarian response plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains critically underfunded, having received only 35 per cent of the $839 million required.

14. The defeat of M23 in November 2013, which brought relative stability to some areas of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, generated hope that some refugees and internally displaced persons would return to their places of origin. Indeed, 1.8 million internally displaced persons returned to their homes between November 2012 and May 2014. Furthermore, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reported a decrease of 40 per cent in the number of persons in displacement camps around Goma between November 2013 and May 2014.

15. Nonetheless, the activities of armed groups have caused new waves of displacement, as many refugees and internally displaced persons continue to fear for their safety. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 492,000 people have been newly displaced since January 2014, including 125,000 in North Kivu and 140,000 in Katanga. Katanga is the province with the highest increase in displacements since December 2013. The displacements in Katanga are due to clashes between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and armed groups, and growing tensions between the Pygmy and Luba communities. Food insecurity is worsening and human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, are still commonplace. The Office estimates that some 75,000 children in the Katanga conflict zone will face acute malnutrition in 2014.

16. In many camps for displaced persons in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, only the most vulnerable have received food assistance over the past six months. The decision to target the most vulnerable was taken after an exercise was carried out at all sites where internally displaced persons had been living and receiving food assistance, some of them for as long as three years. In parallel, the World Food Programme (WFP) made it a priority to provide resources to newly displaced people, in line with their vulnerability status. The prioritization plan was dictated by the need to direct limited financial resources towards life-saving relief activities. The ability of WFP to provide assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and many other countries has been challenged by an increase in the need for food assistance due to the unprecedented number of large-scale and simultaneous emergencies that occurred in 2013 and 2014, including in countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic and the Central African Republic.

17. In addition to the relatively large size of the internally displaced population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approximately 432,500 Congolese refugees currently live in neighbouring countries, an indication that persistent insecurity and a failure to eliminate the root causes of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to hinder lasting voluntary returns. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), however, reports that, despite these challenges, over 182,000 Congolese refugees returned to their country between 2011 and 30 June 2014. In addition, since the beginning of 2014 Congolese refugees who arrived in Uganda over the past year also began to return spontaneously to the Beni area. The fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself is host to 118,000 refugees from neighbouring countries exacerbates the country's already difficult humanitarian situation.

18. In accordance with international refugee law and pursuant to the Congolese refugee law of 2002, Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers of all nationalities residing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo fall under the mandate of the Government and UNHCR. The UNHCR comprehensive strategy for the Rwandan refugee situation addresses the particular situation of Rwandan refugees who entered the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) between 1959 and 1998 and recommends that all aspects leading to a cessation of refugee status (including exemption procedures) for Rwandans who fall in the aforementioned category be implemented progressively. UNHCR works with the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda within the framework of tripartite agreements that uphold the voluntary character of returns while advancing the implementation of durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and local

integration of Congolese and Rwandan refugees. To date, 133,862 Rwandan refugees have voluntarily returned to Rwanda from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 2,552 of them did so in 2014.

C. Update on human rights and sexual and gender-based violence

19. The activities of armed groups and some elements of the security forces remain a serious cause for concern on the human rights front. The political space remains constrained, human rights violations continue in several countries in the region and more efforts are needed to tackle impunity. Violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including sexual and gender-based violence, have continued in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in other States signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. There are strong indications that violations are being committed by all parties without exception. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, armed groups and members of the Congolese defence and security forces continue to commit rape as a weapon of war, along with other forms of sexual violence and human rights violations, during and after rebel attacks on communities.

20. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in May 2014, the Operational Military Court handed down its decision in the Minova case, in which 39 officers of the national armed forces were charged with rape and other war crimes. Specifically, the officers were charged with the rape of more than 130 women and girls in Minova, South Kivu. The trial is viewed as a test of the Government's ability to fight impunity and encourage a culture of accountability for conflict-related sexual violence, crimes against humanity and war crimes. While only two low-level soldiers were convicted of rape, the judgement offered constructive lessons for the prosecution of atrocities in the region in the future.

21. There continue to be calls within the Democratic Republic of the Congo for a specialized chamber to try war crimes, crimes against humanity and conflict-related sexual violence. Such specialized mechanisms can be highly effective in prosecuting alleged perpetrators of international crimes. On 2 May 2014, a bill creating a specialized, mixed chamber was formally received by the Parliament but sent back to the Government owing to constitutional concerns raised by the National Assembly. The Minister of Justice and Human Rights has indicated that a revised bill will soon be considered.

22. On 8 July 2014, the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo passed a law (No. 14/025) allowing the ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, adopted on 22 October 2009 in Kampala. I welcome this development and encourage the Congolese authorities to take further steps to protect all persons displaced in their country.

III. Implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

23. During the reporting period, limited progress was achieved in the implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My report on MONUSCO of 25 September 2014 (S/2014/698) contains further information on the modest advances made in that regard.

24. With the support of MONUSCO and international partners, the National Oversight Mechanism developed benchmarks, indicators of progress and priority actions for the six national commitments set out in the Framework, through a participatory process involving national and provincial administrations, civil society and international partners. On 12 July, participants in a national seminar organized by the Mechanism and the Ministry of Planning endorsed a matrix comprising more than 50 benchmarks and more than 300 indicators. Among the participants were the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for the Budget, Daniel Mukoko Samba, along with other officials and representatives of the United Nations, the diplomatic corps, civil society and the private sector. The benchmarking process has strengthened the partnership between the Mechanism, the Ministry of Planning and the international community, which will help in identifying activities to be included in the 2015 budget.

25. During the reporting period, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo approved its national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan, estimated to cost $85 million. On 11 July, the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Alexandre Ntambo, shared the plan with the diplomatic corps to seek financial support from donors. During the meeting, the Minister also announced that the Government would contribute $10 million to the plan. MONUSCO has pledged $8 million for the identification of former combatants and the provision of food supplies to demobilized armed groups still in transit camps. Notwithstanding the finalization of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan, the development of benchmarks and other modest achievements, some critical aspects of the national commitments have yet to be implemented. These include sustained security sector reform, consolidation of State authority, decentralization, economic development, reconciliation and democratization.

B. Commitments of the countries in the region

26. Despite persistent challenges to the stabilization of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and in relations between countries in the region, leaders in the region have continued to take ownership of and interest in advancing the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. By and large, the countries in the region have continued to adhere to their commitments, in particular those related to non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries and assistance or support to armed groups, despite unverified reports to the contrary. The verification activities of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism continue to be critical. While regional and economic cooperation has increased among countries in the region, much more needs to be done to enhance

the administration of justice through regional judicial cooperation and to ensure that those who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or crimes of aggression, or persons targeted by United Nations sanctions, are held accountable.

27. As noted above, the President of Angola, as Chair of ICGLR, has helped to bring together the States members of ICGLR and SADC, the two organizations in the region that are key for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. In his capacity as Chair, the President has convened one ordinary summit, three mini-summits and a number of ministerial meetings to discuss issues related to the objectives of the Framework. During those events, States members of ICGLR and SADC sought solutions for the neutralization of armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations and the improvement of relations between some countries, among other key pending issues. In addition, Angola has strengthened relations with countries in the region in order to push ahead its agenda for peace, security and economic affairs. On 15 May, the Minister of External Relations of Angola, George Chikoti, visited Kigali, where he and his Rwandan counterpart co-signed a general cooperation agreement, an agreement on a joint cooperation commission and a memorandum of understanding. The documents aim to regularize political and economic relations between the two countries.

28. Regional cooperation in the context of the northern corridor integration projects and the East African Community was also reinforced during the reporting period. On 24 June, the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda signed a service contract for the development of the Kampala-Kigali portion of the northern corridor railway project. The agreement was reached after a decision had been taken earlier in 2014 by Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to enter into a tripartite arrangement to accelerate regional integration. The development is part of the planned construction of a railway connection along the northern corridor between Mombasa, Kenya, and Kampala through Nairobi and Kigali, with a possible extension to Juba. The project is expected to be completed by March 2018. On 2 July, the ministers of economy, finance, foreign affairs and infrastructure of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda met with the Secretary-General of the East African Community in Kigali to discuss ongoing northern corridor integration projects, including in the areas of infrastructure, transport, commodity exchange, human resources capacity-building, air space management and crude oil pipeline development. The next summit of the northern corridor countries is scheduled to be held in Kampala in September 2014.

29. During the reporting period, the Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism also met regularly in Nairobi, under the co-chairmanship of the Special Adviser to my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Modibo I. Toure, and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Boubacar Diarra. The Technical Support Committee held its seventh meeting in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 20 to 22 May, with the support of MONUSCO, the Congolese authorities and the Office of my Special Envoy. While in North Kivu, the members of the Committee visited a camp for internally displaced persons, a police training centre and a *centre de regroupement* administered by the national armed forces in Mubambiro, which hosts about 420 former combatants from various armed groups. These field visits enabled Committee members to gain a better understanding of the situation on the ground

and, therefore, to better advise their respective Governments. The Committee also suggested ways to strengthen the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, neutralize illegal armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and reinsert former combatants into civilian life.

30. While multilateral and bilateral cooperation has improved in the region during the reporting period, much more needs to be done to rebuild trust among the core signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and accelerate the implementation of the regional plan of action. My Special Envoy and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region have prepared a report with key recommendations on ways to boost the implementation of that plan of action. The report, which takes into account the work of the Technical Support Committee, was submitted to the Regional Oversight Mechanism at its fourth high-level meeting, held on 22 September in New York in the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

C. International commitments

31. On 11 June, in collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact, my Special Envoy convened a private sector responsible investment round table in Addis Ababa that was attended by over 100 participants from the private sector, civil society, academia and government, as well as other representatives from the region. It was one in a series of steps designed to raise the awareness of stakeholders on the issue of investment in the Great Lakes region, in preparation for a private sector investment conference to be held in the first quarter of 2015. The round table also provided a regional platform for dialogue between the public and private sectors on the issue of investment in the States signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

32. An investment opportunity brief for the region has also been prepared with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation. The brief is designed to provide potential investors with information on priority investment areas and projects identified through a consultative process in all the signatory countries. A regional ministerial consultation on the brief is scheduled to be held in Luanda in late 2014, with the participation of Governments and private sector stakeholders. Key findings and recommendations will be presented for endorsement by the Regional Oversight Mechanism at its fifth meeting, to be held in Addis Ababa.

33. During my joint visit to the Great Lakes region with the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, in May 2013, the World Bank pledged $1 billion to support activities in the region that further the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The World Bank is on track to implement all its commitments within the 24-month timeline set during our visit. Between May 2013 and July 2014, a total of $538 million was approved by the World Bank for regional programmes in the areas of energy development, combating sexual and gender-based violence, women's health, capacity-building for ICGLR and improvement of information and communications technology connectivity. A key project was approved on 26 June 2014, under which $106.9 million will support the

Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Women's Health Project, which covers Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The project aims to benefit more than 641,000 women and girls, half a million of whom are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and will also support a regional policy approach endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of countries in the Great Lakes region in the 2011 Kampala declaration on sexual and gender-based violence.

34. In addition, the World Bank and the Office of my Special Envoy have established a facility for technical assistance to ensure that projects to be implemented in the region with the support of the World Bank are conflict-sensitive and in line with the economic and regional integration objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Meanwhile, other resources have been pledged to the region by various development partners. For instance, at least €3.2 billion has been allocated to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia under the Eleventh European Development Fund (2014-2020).

IV. Activities of my Special Envoy

35. My Special Envoy has continued to engage regional leaders, bilateral and multilateral partners and civil society organizations to ensure that the broadest possible range of actors remain committed to and supportive of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. During the reporting period, my Special Envoy Mary Robinson and her staff visited several countries in the region, including Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Rwanda, where they engaged in various activities related to the Framework. In addition, she continued to engage regional and international partners in Addis Ababa, Brussels, London, New York and Washington, D.C.

36. Also during the reporting period, my Special Envoy met with the Chair of ICGLR, lending her support to his good offices to advance high-level political dialogue with fellow Heads of State, to reach consensus on issues of common concern. In that regard, she visited Angola from 7 to 9 May, where she met the Vice-President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Economy and the Secretary of State for Defence to discuss how to advance the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and maximize opportunities for synergy with Angola. Topics discussed included accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, tackling FDLR, strengthening the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism and preparing for the Great Lakes private sector investment conference. I was pleased to learn about the commitment of Angola to devote efforts and resources to the fulfilment of the mandate of the Chair of ICGLR.

37. My Special Envoy travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 17 and 18 March and again on 2 and 3 June, with the other envoys and representatives. During her meetings with the President and other senior government officials in Kinshasa, she raised the issue of elections, as well as the status of implementation of the country's national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. She emphasized the need for the timely release of a comprehensive electoral calendar for local, provincial and general elections, and assured the President of international partners' readiness to work with his

Government on all critical issues. She also commended the Government for conducting military operations against ADF and conveyed her condolences for the casualties suffered by the national armed forces.

38. On the issue of elections, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stated that this was a sovereign matter. He noted that, for purposes of neutrality and impartiality, the conduct of the elections was handled by the Independent National Electoral Commission and that, therefore, all technical questions should be addressed to the Chair of the Commission, Apollinaire Malu Malu.

39. On 7 April, I led a high-level delegation, which included my Special Envoy, to Rwanda to participate in the events marking the twentieth anniversary of the genocide. I stressed that the world should learn from the tragic experience of Rwanda and acknowledged that the United Nations should have done more to prevent the genocide. I commended the impressive transformation of the country and called for continued efforts to protect human rights and promote democracy. In his speech, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, highlighted some factors behind that successful transformation, notably inter-ethnic reconciliation and accountability for serious crimes.

40. On 6 May, my Special Envoy travelled to Brussels and met with the members of the European Union Political and Security Committee. She discussed some of the priority activities arising from the regional plan of action, in particular the fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources, regional judicial cooperation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the return of refugees (especially minorities) and civil society and youth.

41. Within the context of her engagement with youth and children, my Special Envoy participated in the Children's Forum of Hope, held in Bujumbura on 31 May and 1 June. The event enabled children from seven countries of the region to bond, build trust and become "ambassadors of hope" who would champion the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework in their respective countries. My Special Envoy also participated in the ICGLR summit on youth employment held in Nairobi on 24 July, which brought together youth, experts and government officials from the 13 signatory countries of the Framework. The purpose of the summit was to develop a coordinated approach to youth unemployment and underemployment in the Great Lakes region.

42. My Special Envoy also reached out to the Heads of State and Government of countries in the Great Lakes region in Washington, D.C., from 4 to 6 August, in the margins of the 2014 United States-Africa Leaders Summit. On 7 August, in New York, she addressed the Security Council for the last time as my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. Later that day, she and the Minister for Africa of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland co-chaired an informal ministerial meeting on the Great Lakes region to promote the rapid disarmament of FDLR and the full implementation of the Nairobi Declarations. My incoming Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Djinnit, attended both meetings.

43. Recognizing that addressing forced displacement is key to promoting peace, security and cooperation in the region, my Special Envoy has made it a priority to support efforts to alleviate the conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons by promoting conditions for durable, voluntary and safe returns in dignity.

From 20 June to 4 July 2014, a joint mission composed of staff from the Office of my Special Envoy, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNHCR travelled to Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (North Kivu) and Burundi in order to assess the conditions of refugees, to identify challenges hampering their safe and sustainable return and to devise medium- and long-term strategies. Finding durable solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees is an immense task that will continue to take a significant amount of time, concerted efforts and national, regional and international commitment.

44. The World Bank and UNHCR are conducting an in-depth study on forced displacement in the Great Lakes region; it is expected that a report based on that study will be issued during the last quarter of 2014. The aim is to obtain information on the development needs of displaced persons, opportunities for development interventions in support of displaced persons and recommendations for activities to improve resilience and social cohesion in border communities of the Great Lakes region.

45. In order to maximize synergies and promote a coordinated approach within the United Nations system, the Office of my Special Envoy, together with the United Nations country teams and United Nations representatives, met in Kigali from 28 to 30 May to lay the foundation for a common strategy for the Great Lakes region in support of the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Further work is under way to formulate an integrated approach to advance the implementation of the Framework.

46. During the reporting period my Special Envoy intensified her engagement with civil society actors during her visits to the region. I was pleased that a coalition of civil society organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued a report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework on the first anniversary of the agreement. This development suggests that civil society actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are fully prepared to monitor the implementation of the Framework and to hold their Government accountable. My Special Envoy also engaged with civil society representatives from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, to collect their views on the implementation of the Framework.

47. Following the launch of the Women's Platform for the Framework earlier this year, my Special Envoy and the Office's staff have concluded arrangements to render the Platform operational. The Platform's advisory board held its inaugural conference call on 8 July 2014. The advisory board is a team of experts with experience and expertise in development and women's rights in the Great Lakes region and is mandated to provide guidance on the implementation of the Platform's objectives. I am pleased that Mary Robinson will continue to be involved in the Women's Platform as a key member of the advisory board.

48. The implementation of projects to benefit women in the Great Lakes region has also been at the core of my Special Envoy's activities. As a result of her advocacy efforts with the Governments of the Netherlands and Ireland, over 30 grants will be awarded to projects intended to improve the living conditions and livelihoods of women in rural, conflict-affected areas of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. The grants will focus on: (a) monitoring of and advocacy for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework; (b) implementation of regional and national plans of action under Security Council

resolution 1325 (2000); (c) combating violence against women and assisting women affected by violence; (d) supporting women's livelihoods and development activities; and (e) making clean energy accessible to communities at the local level.

V. Observations and recommendations

49. Over the past six months, there have been notable efforts to stabilize the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and advance the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Nonetheless, delays in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, mistrust between Governments and leaders in the region, disagreements over the voluntary disarmament of FDLR and slow implementation of the regional plan of action represent significant obstacles that must be overcome if sustainable peace and stability is to be brought to the region.

50. One of the most pressing issues remains the lack of expeditious implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, which perpetuates mistrust among Member States. Progress on this front would help build trust and confidence, reduce the risk of a relapse into armed conflict and consolidate the stability of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Every effort must therefore be made to implement all commitments of the Declarations and to prevent any reversal of the gains achieved. Accordingly, the technical visits by officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Uganda and Rwanda in April and July to process eligible M23 members should be followed by concrete steps to achieve their immediate repatriation. I commend the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its efforts so far. I encourage it to work closely with the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda to establish clear timelines and appropriate follow-up actions to conclude the repatriation of former M23 combatants. Furthermore, the National Oversight Mechanism should accelerate the follow-up processes, with support from ICGLR and the Office of my Special Envoy, to ensure that the Nairobi Declarations are fully implemented.

51. The neutralization of all armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including FDLR, through non-military and military actions, should also remain a high priority. I welcome the road map agreed by Heads of State in the region at the 14 August mini-summit convened by the President of Angola, in his capacity as ICGLR Chair, and the endorsement of the six-month time frame by SADC Heads of State, in their communiqué of 18 August. FDLR must disarm unconditionally and in a timely manner. In that respect, I look forward to a positive outcome of the joint ICGLR-SADC midterm review in October. Immediate and decisive actions should quickly be taken thereafter to complete the process of neutralizing FDLR, for the sake of peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

52. I commend the President of Angola for his efforts to build a regional consensus on the neutralization of FDLR and other armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also support his efforts to lead a high-level dialogue on sensitive issues that adversely affect regional cooperation and durable peace. Furthermore, I welcome the unified and strong message on FDLR issued by the Security Council on 26 August. It is my hope that the team of envoys, led by my Special Envoy, will continue to support regional efforts to definitively address the issue of FDLR.

53. I am pleased to note that the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, despite continuous logistical and political challenges, remains a viable security mechanism for building confidence among the countries in the region, although it needs to be strengthened further. I call upon all Member States in the region to increase collaboration through existing regional mechanisms, such as the Mechanism and the Joint Intelligence Fusion Cell, as well through joint bilateral commissions. My Special Envoy is committed to rallying international support for the Mechanism. I also urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to exercise restraint in border areas and to engage through the Joint Bilateral Commission and the African Union Border Programme to resolve any border-related issues. In that regard, the findings and recommendations of the Mechanism on the recent military skirmish between the two countries warrant serious consideration.

54. The root causes of conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo will not be fully addressed unless the commitments made in Addis Ababa in February 2013 are implemented in full. In this regard, I welcome the positive steps taken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the other Governments in the region over the past six months, which show that they remain committed to the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I also welcome the continuous engagement of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which remains seized of matters related to the Great Lakes region, as demonstrated by its sessions on the implementation of the Framework held in Addis Ababa on 17 June and 22 August. Despite our collective engagement, the overall implementation process remains slow and every effort must be made to energize it. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, implementation is lagging in several critical areas such as security sector reform, decentralization, reconciliation, tolerance and democratization. I urge the Government to accelerate the implementation of its commitments under the Framework and to follow through on the priority recommendations arising from the *concertations nationales* (national dialogue). I call upon the Government to start implementing the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan and to accelerate measures to restore and consolidate State authority throughout eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, priority should be accorded to the establishment of a rapid reaction force, as provided for in Security Council resolution 2098 (2013). In the same vein, I call upon the other signatories to the Framework to remain fully committed to its objectives and to honour their commitments.

55. In the region, leaders have shown their resolve to work together for peace and security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. I commend the countries of the northern corridor of East Africa for their resolve in accelerating regional integration. It is my hope that similar progress will be made in the context of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, whose leaders have not met at the summit level in over 20 years, despite significant interaction at the ministerial and technical levels. Reviving the Community would no doubt boost conflict prevention and confidence-building efforts in the Great Lakes region, notably through enhanced economic cooperation and social transformation in the countries involved.

56. The Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism has been serving as a forum for dialogue and confidence-building in the region, under the leadership of my Special Envoy and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region. More concrete actions are needed, however, to expedite

the implementation of the regional plan of action and achieve all the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. To this end, I welcome the report on progress made with regard to the Framework that was jointly presented by my Special Envoy and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region at the fourth meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in New York on 22 September. I urge the countries in the region to carefully consider the recommendations made in the report and to take the steps necessary to accelerate the implementation process. I also count on members of the Technical Support Committee to play a more active role in the implementation of the Framework in their respective countries, with support from the Office of my Special Envoy.

57. Coordinated and coherent support by international partners remains critical to ensure that progress is made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. In that regard, the development partners conference, which is scheduled to be held towards the end of 2014 in Brussels, is a positive step towards achieving the promises of the economic pillar envisaged in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I welcome the commitments made by various development partners, including the World Bank, the European Union and other bilateral partners to the Great Lakes region, and I commend their continuing commitment to the region. I encourage multilateral and bilateral partners to strengthen their collaboration with regional organizations and the Governments in the region to promote sustainable development. To that end, I am encouraged by the significant progress that the Office of my Special Envoy, together with ICGLR and the Government of Angola, has made towards organizing a Great Lakes private sector investment conference, including through the development of an investment opportunity brief that identifies catalytic cross-border development projects. I appeal to all key partners, including private investors, to participate in this conference with a view to supporting projects that will bring development and stability to the region.

58. The issue of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons remains a major humanitarian concern. No effort should be spared in finding durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the Great Lakes region. My Special Envoy will continue to work with mandated agencies to encourage coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels to promote an environment conducive to sustainable returns. I encourage key actors to support the Governments in the region to ensure that State authority, the rule of law, basic services, property and land rights, and economic opportunities are in place when people do begin to return. I call on donors to help ensure that agencies such as WFP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNHCR have the funds necessary to assist persons in need.

59. I remain concerned about recurrent reports of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, by armed groups and the national armed forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I commend the Government for its efforts to investigate these crimes and prosecute those responsible, and encourage all Governments in the region to create effective mechanisms to address them and hold perpetrators, including government officials, accountable. I also urge the Governments in the region to develop a strategy to foster regional judicial cooperation, in line with their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

60. I am pleased to note that from 20 August to 14 September, during his introductory tour of the region, my new Special Envoy received unequivocal assurances of support from Governments and leaders in the region. Building on the work of his predecessor, he will continue to work closely with the ICGLR Chair and other leaders in the region, as well as international partners, to ensure a coordinated approach to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. He will also continue to work in close cooperation with the African Union, ICGLR, SADC and the team of envoys to ensure that regional and international efforts complement and reinforce each other. Through his Office, my Special Envoy will continue to develop specific initiatives to advance regional social and economic cooperation, encourage the full participation of women, youth and civil society in all aspects of the Framework, and develop synergies with partners.

61. Finally, I wish to thank my outgoing Special Envoy, Mary Robinson, for her contribution to peace in the Great Lakes region. I also thank my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Martin Kobler, as well as the staff of special political missions and peacekeeping missions in the region. I call on the Security Council and other international partners to provide my current Special Envoy, Said Djinnit, with all the support necessary to revitalize and ensure the effective implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.